

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/paperchase/2009/05/us-religious-freedom-report-adds-iraq.php>

The **US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** has released [press release; materials] its annual report on worldwide religious freedoms, elevating Iraq and Nigeria to its list of "countries of particular concern" (CPC) and adding six new countries to its "watch list." The other CPC are Burma, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. The six new countries on the second level "watch list" are Laos, Russia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Venezuela, which join Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Egypt, and Indonesia. Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, and Sri Lanka are "closely monitored." According to the report, released Friday:

Despite the efforts of **the Commission**, the State Department, and Congress, individuals and communities around the world continue to suffer severe violations of their human rights on account of their religious beliefs or because they hold no beliefs. As it has done with prior administrations, **the Commission** will continue to engage the President and other U.S. government leaders, providing recommendations and raising public and private concerns about issues affecting respect for freedom of religion or belief. While much has been accomplished in the past decade, **the Commission**, as well as U.S. international religious freedom policy, still has a great deal to accomplish.